

**SPECIAL MEETING
CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2008
WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL
400 PHENIX AVENUE
EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5:30 P.M.
PUBLIC SESSION: 7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

A special meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Stycos, Mr. Traficante, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway. Also present were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Votto, Mr. Nero, Mrs. Lundsten, and Mr. Laliberte.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation (possible litigation – Caruolo Action) and CASA Contracts.

Chairman Traficante reconvened public session at 7:15 p.m.

The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

Chairman Traficante stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – February 27, 2008

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the February 27, 2008 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.

II. Public Acknowledgements/Communications

There were no public acknowledgements or communications.

III. Chairperson Communications

Mr. Traficante notified the audience that the committee was going to follow the procedure this evening that they followed at the past meeting. They will entertain discussion as the motions are made by members of the committee. Therefore, once it is moved and seconded, he will open up discussion to the committee and members of the general public.

IV. Superintendent Communications

Superintendent Scherza stated that there is a Resolution on tonight's agenda, No. 08-3-9, that calls for elimination of the balance of the current fiscal year's middle school sports. That was at the recommendation of the fiscal consultants who are trying to help the committee bring its budget in line. However, since they have already contracts most of the coaches, those savings could not be realized. He advised the School Committee to withdraw that Resolution from their agenda and treat it as moot and keep everything in tact as planned originally.

V. School Committee Member Communications

VI. Public Hearing

a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Matters

b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)

ADMINISTRATION

NO. 08-3-9 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the elimination of Spring Middle School Sports for the 2007-2008 current school years, be approved.

This Resolution was withdrawn.

VII. Consent Calendar/Consent Agenda

Chairman Traficante stated that Resolution No.'s 08-3-10, 08-3-11, and 08-3-12 fall under the Consent Agenda.

PERSONNEL

NO. 08-3-10 - Whereas, there may be more qualified individuals who will apply for current positions, and

Whereas, certain positions became available after the teacher selection of July 25, 2007, and more senior teachers may elect to occupy these positions under Article XVI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and

Whereas, funding for certain positions is not assured for the 2008-2009 school year, and as a result, more senior teachers could elect to take a current position, and

Whereas, positions occupied by retirees must be posted each year, and

Whereas, there may be changes in student distribution, and as a result, more senior teachers may take a current position, and

Whereas, positions must now be made available for more senior teachers who are scheduled to return from leave, and

Whereas, because of these concerns, and in accordance with Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, the Superintendent has recommended that the employment of certain teachers be terminated at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, and

Whereas, the Superintendent has sent prior notice to said teachers informing them of the specific reasons for their termination, and

Whereas, the Committee has provided said teachers with the opportunity to be heard in Executive Session regarding their termination,

Be it RESOLVED that said teachers be terminated at the close of the school year under provisions of Title 16 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode island, and

Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify those teachers of the Committee's action to terminate their employment.

NO. 08-3-11 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the

Superintendent, the following individual be reappointed as an athletic coach:

CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST

John Palumbo Head Coed Golf

NO. 08-3-12 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following individual be appointed as an athletic coach:

Michael Boyajian, Assistant Baseball, Cranston High School East

Step – 7

Class – C

Playing Competition – High School/College

Experience – Cranston Coach

Certification – Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid Certified

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Joseph Salimeno, Assistant Coed Golf, Cranston High School West

Step – 3

Class – D

Playing Experience – Recreational

Coaching Experience – Cranston High School East Volunteer

Certification – Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid Certified

Robin Giarrusso, Interim Assistant Boys' Tennis, Cranston High School West

Step – 1

Class – D

Playing Experience – Cranston West Girls' Tennis

Coaching Experience – Cranston High School West Cheerleading

Certification - Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid Certified

Lloyd Bochner, Head Girls' Fastpitch Softball, Park View Middle School

Step – 7

Class – D

Playing Experience – Recreational

Coaching Experience – Head Coach Park View Girls' Soccer and Basketball

Certification - Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid Certified

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that these Resolutions be adopted.

VIII. Action Calendar / Action Agenda

NO. 08-3-13 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following individual be appointed as a volunteer coach:

Daniel Archetto Fastpitch Softball, Cranston High School West

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Lombardi that this Resolution be adopted.

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Mr. Archetto stated that he would recuse himself from voting on this Resolution because of the fact that this person is a first cousin.

This Resolution was adopted with Mr. Archetto recusing.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

NO. 08-2-13 – RESOLVED, that the 2008-2009 Operating Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent, be approved.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried to take this Resolution off the table.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Lombardi that this Resolution be adopted.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that at the last meeting the committee amended the budget to reflect an additional approximately \$700,000 for the middle school move. She asked if the district moved to a Singleton Schedule of unified art meaning that they teach all year round one day of art, one day of music, and one of technology, would there be an additional savings. Mr. Nero responded that there would be a savings. They met this morning, and they told him what their FTE's were. They are going to begin to schedule on Monday. He is being a little cautious because they have around a 1 in terms of an additional FTE in savings. He wants to be careful as they go forward with the scheduling, but there is about a full FTE right now in savings.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Nero if this means that at this state that he would not be comfortable reducing the budget by 1 FTE. Mr. Nero responded that if it was five or six weeks from now, he would feel comfortable. There are a couple of spots where they are going to be having a half-time teacher at one school and a half-time teacher at another school. One school he is a little bit comfortable with. There are a couple of spots where they will have a half-time teacher at one school and a half-time teacher at another school. As he has said right along in the budgetary process, even in the best of times when they are not cutting and making all the decisions to move the 6th grade back, as they get closer to the opening of schools, there are

always situations where they have to add a little bit here and there. It may be a .4 or a little bit more in art, a .2 in tech ed; it comes out to about 1. To eliminate it, he is a little uncomfortable right now at this point in the budgetary process. He doesn't want to cut it and then have a need for it. He would rather stick to what they originally discussed and then look at it again. He knows the committee is under the gun tonight, and he respects that.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Votto if in the layoff notices he prepared for the possible Singleton Schedule. Mr. Votto responded that he was unsure what the Singleton Schedule is. Whatever Mr. Nero and the middle school people had given him, that is

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what he built in in terms of layoffs. That was Scenario No. 4. Mr. Nero added that they are covered for the way the committee took the vote. Ms. Iannazzi asked if they were covered for a revised Scenario No. 4. Mr. Nero responded that he thought they would be because they wouldn't go right to the bare bone; and some of it may be a .2 situation. He knows that there are going to be other amendments tonight that in essence may impact on that. They have already made room for those types of things.

Mr. Lombardi indicated to Mr. Nero that he had provided the committee with an itemization of where the committee is so far in

terms of the budget cuts. They are at \$6.5 million. Included in this is 20% cost sharing. Mr. Balducci's memo to the committee suggested \$139,000. He asked what made up the difference of \$139,000 versus the \$138,000 in actual savings. Mr. Balducci responded that in the first go-around he missed a few positions that should have been identified in the first one. He also should have eliminated positions that did show up on the original one. The net effect was \$1,025 increase in the overall adjustment. Mr. Lombardi commented that he believed his motion the last time asked for a 20% co-share for executive and/or the so-called CASA group. His number, \$138,000, includes CAMS and something called miscellaneous. Mr. Balducci explained that miscellaneous applies to a few positions that are not considered as part of what use to be called the CAMS group or the certified CASA group. They are individuals who do not have the luxury of belonging to any particular administrative group but are non-unionized, and those are the people they added to the second list. Mr. Lombardi stated that in terms of his motion the other evening, he believed they should be including only at this point \$90,000 of that number because it only included what was identified as CASA and executive group who make up \$8,600 and CASA about \$82,000. He didn't believe that his motion included CAMS and/or miscellaneous. Mr. Traficante stated that he believed it did not. Mr. Lombardi added that the number should be adjusted downward from \$138,000 to \$90,000.

Ms. Iannazzi moved as a reduction to the budget to include a 20%

cost sharing for all non-union employees in the amount of whatever is the balance essentially between the CASA group and the remaining non-union employees.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Stycos referred to the middle schools, and stated that he believed in Mr. Nero's projection when he put the savings for the projected savings by moving the 6th grade he believed in Scenario No. 4 he had projected 37 or 38 6th grade classrooms. In Scenario No. 3 it was 37, but in Scenario No. 4 it was 38. He asked if it turned out to be 37 or 38,

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and Mr. Nero responded that it turned out to be 37. He asked Mr. Nero to look at it to see if it went from 38 to 37 on Scenario No. 4 because going from 38 to 37 seems to be specifically mentioned at the bottom of Scenario No. 3 but not at the bottom of Scenario No. 4.

Mr. Stycos referred to the department chairs in the middle schools, and indicated that normally a teacher teaches five classes, but department chairs teach fewer than five classes depending on the

number of teachers in their department. This is on page 30 of the collective bargaining agreement. He asked that by going from three grades to two grades obviously they are reducing the number of social studies teachers and the number of science teachers. He asked if that will change the number of teachers that the department chair is responsible for and if it will make the department chairs teach more classes thereby saving the district money. Mr. Votto responded that the department chairs at the high schools are driven by the number of teachers that they supervise. When they created the middle school in the mid 90's, they came up with the current schedule of department chairs in terms of the number they teach which is .4 or 2 classes. The middle schools are not dictated by that scale. Mr. Nero added that he believed he included that in the math as they moved forward. Every time he explained that when he did the financial impact that included that plus 1 savings. The numbers the committee saw in the presentation that he made that night were the actual savings including that 1 position. That was consistent throughout that presentation.

Mr. Traficante turned the Chair over to Ms. Iannazzi.

Mr. Traficante stated that just prior to the meeting he was informed about a certain situation he is not familiar with. The area is with a TAC Room teacher or teachers at the middle school level. He asked if there is a TAC Room teacher in each of the middle schools. Mr. Nero responded that there is a Planning Room teacher at Bain, Park View,

and there is one at Western Hills. It is generally a special education teacher. Mr. Traficante stated that he assumed the TAC Room is utilized by those students who are removed from a class or suspended from a class. He asked if they employ a full-time special education teacher to cover the TAC Room. Mr. Nero responded that they also do IEP's and some of them will teach an inclusion classroom. When he was principal of Western Hills, they used it for a variety of different reasons. One of the issues that came up six or seven years ago is that the State of Rhode Island took a hard line on suspensions from school especially as it related to students who had an IEP. When a student is suspended beyond ten days who has an IEP or for any time less than that, the district has to provide the appropriate services for that child, and that is why especially for students with IEP's they had to deliver it from a special education teacher. The difference in the cost of it is no different than having a special education or a regular education teacher. It has to be delivered from a special education teacher.

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Mr. Traficante asked how many students during the course of the day would be sent to a TAC Room each period on an average. Mr. DeCristofaro, Principal of Park View Middle School, responded that they had to draw some distinctions. There is a distinction between

the TAC Room and the Planning Center. At Park View, they have a Planning Center staff full time which is used for children who may be coming back from a long-term illness and need some remediation before getting back into the general population; some have temporary emotional difficulties by some environmental accident or situation of family; and there are a variety of different reasons for children to spend a portion of their day in a Planning Center working with the instructor who is there. The TAC Room is also called IRC. The distinction between TAC and IRC (Immediate Referral Center) is the TAC Room can be used for an in-house suspension room. It is also that same room in his building that is used for ICR which is for a period-by-period dismissal from a certain class in which a child gets sent there for the remainder of that period and then goes back to the classroom from that point on. That is staffed on a period-by-period basis by coverages from within the building.

Mr. Traficante asked on the average how many children per period are in the room, and Mr. DeCristofaro responded that there are a number of periods where there is nobody, and there are other periods where there are three or four students. On the average he would say there are one or two students. Mr. Traficante asked if the Planning Center could also be covered in the same manner. Mr. DeCristofaro indicated that he would say not because his Planning Center teacher collaborates on a daily basis with the team teachers to secure work, to identify areas of need, and then in turn works with children some of whom are on truncated schedules who are in that room the entire

time they are in school. To use a period-by-period coverage would not be sufficient because those people are not in contact with the team; they are not up to speed on the work the child needs.

Mr. Traficante explained that this information came via a phone call prior to the meeting. In most cases, there is very few in this TAC Room or in the Planning Center, and Mr. DeCristofaro said this was correct. He said the Planning Center is busy. They may have a student who for a variety of reasons may need to be in the Planning Center in lieu of a particular unified arts class because they are in need of intense one-on-one work in which that teacher collaborates with the team and also home. His Planning Center is quite busy. The TAC Room, fortunately for his school, is not quite as busy.

Mr. Barbieri, Principal of Bain Middle School, said that he has both a TAC Room and a Planning Center. The TAC Room is an alternative for out-of-school suspension, and the Planning Center is essentially used for transition of students into school, out of the school, health concerns, or they need a revised day because they are using the RTI; and they are trying to meet the needs of all students and this may be one of the factors which can be used. These are interventions from preventing the student from getting an IEP. One of the indicators for a school as graded from the RI Department of Education

is attendance. What they are trying to do is keep the students in school rather than looking at some type of suspension. Both of these programs help them to meet that indicator. Mr. Traficante asked if the TAC Room was covered in the same manner with in-house coverage. He asked if a full-time teacher was employed for the Planning Center, and Mr. Barbieri responded yes.

Ms. Cole, Principal of Western Hills, said that her school has a TAC Room. There is one teacher who covers the TAC Room but also does double duty for upper level library help for students who are coming back from a long-term illness or struggling. They might not meet the criteria for special education services so they try to provide them supportive services. The teacher in that classroom does double duty; she oversees the TAC Room for students who are not suspended out of school. She stated that she will do anything not to suspend a student out of school but to keep them in school because they can give them services that way. The teacher oversees that room and in addition provides special education services and regular education services for students to give them assistance depending on what their needs might be. Mr. Traficante asked if it was covered in house, and Ms. Cole said that it is one teacher who oversees that program, the TAC Room and provides services to students via the IEP and students through the response to intervention who might not meet the criteria for an IEP but who need additional support services. She further commented that she does not have a Planning Center separate from the TAC Room. Mr. Traficante asked on average how

many children use it, and Ms. Cole said that on an average five to ten children use it, not including students that the teacher who oversees that room might be servicing children because they have a referral system for kids who need help. Her responsibility is to oversee what is happening for kids in school suspension and also deliver services at the same time. Mr. Traficante asked Ms. Cole if she was of the same opinion as Mr. DeCristofaro that this cannot be covered in house. Ms. Cole responded that they want to be prevention based. If they provide it in house and have someone covering it period to period, it is just a kind of punitive situation. They want to turn it into a support service to keep them out of that and be prevention based in having a teacher who oversees that and is able to provide services to those students rather than just sitting them because they are being punished it keeps kids out of TAC and provides a more supportive environment for students. It is really a part of their whole response to intervention and supportive systems in the building.

Mr. Traficante asked if this particular TAC Room is used as a dumping ground, and Ms. Cole said that it is not. Mr. Traficante commented that it is used to remove a student from class who is somewhat disruptive and the teacher cannot handle this student. Mr. Barbieri, Principal of Bain Middle School, said that the In-house Suspension Room is keeping a student from staying home where they will miss out on work and will become part of a vicious cycle where they are at home for a week or two weeks. They miss out on all that instruction, and they come back to school, are put back in the

classroom, and start their misbehaviors again. The In-house Suspension Room allows them to keep

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kids in school, and teachers are allowed to remove kids from the In-house Suspension Room if they have a lab or special education needs that are mandated in their IEP. That can all be done in the course of the day because they have that available for them.

Mr. Nero commented that sometimes one will look at a situation and asked why it is here and how did it got here. This goes back to seven or eight years ago when the State was publishing the suspension reports in the newspaper, and Cranston was getting hit bad. He, Mr. Lemoi, and Mr. Frederick met, and they decided to put this into place. Even when they deal with Truancy Court, if Magistrate Paulhus is looking at a situation where a student got into trouble and is a truancy issue, then rather suspending him out of school, this is one of the remediations they do by suspending them in school and keeping them there so that they don't miss any more time. When he came up with the idea at Western Hills to do this several years ago, it was based on the fact that he would rather keep the student in school. There were some students who had behaviors where they would be suspended for five days, and instead of what he would do is suspend them for three days and put them in the teacher Planning Room for two days. They are kept out of the regular classroom

environment but not suspend them for five days from school.

Mr. Stycos stated that he would be making a motion that did not have a price tag connected to it.

Mr. Stycos moved that the committee state in the budget their intention to reduce the heating temperatures in the schools. Right now the policy is 68 to 72. They can reduce that to 65 to 68 and the cooling temperatures which are not 74 to 78 reduce them to 70 to 74.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion for discussion.

Mr. Stycos explained that the committee has a policy that sets out these temperatures, and he feels that the temperatures are a little high. The district could save some money by reducing them to the 65/68 range on the heating and 70/74 range on the cooling. It might mean that people have to wear a sweater, but the district would save some money on this. Procedurally, even if they state this as an intention in the budget, the committee would have to amend the policy at a later School Committee meeting because it is in a policy.

Mr. Scherza stated that they have already had that discussion between himself and Mr. Zisseron in the fall to reduce the temperatures. More importantly, the district has a contract with EEI which is an energy management company, and there is an energy management person on staff, and the company is also advising them

building by building as to what to do and what these things should be. The only fear is that unilaterally they should not change something when they have a multi-thousand dollar

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contract that they have an agency to do. He asked Mr. Zisseron to share his thoughts because he works with the energy conservation person.

Mr. Zisseron stated to Mr. Stycos that his recommended temperatures were 65 to 68, and indicated that with those temperatures the schools would be between 55 and 60. The schools are old, and the windows are no good. They get a lot of cold air leaking through, and even though the thermostat may be at 72 or 73, they would be lucky if the room is 70 or 71. This will make those rooms extremely cold. The night stats are set between 55 and 60 at night depending upon the building and depending how long it takes that building to recover for the next day. If the stats are at 68 or 70 during the day, at Horton School the wind goes through the windows; one can literally see the shades going back and forth. The stat there is at 72, and it just does not keep up. That is one of the biggest problems. If they took a school and put new windows in it and made the building air tight, then he could understand going in that direction. Right now he didn't think they are there.

Mr. Stycos indicated that Mr. Zisseron had used Horton as an example and asked about Orchard Farms School. Mr. Zisseron responded that they have a pretty good pulse on that school, and it runs around 70. Mr. Stycos asked why that school couldn't be 65 to 68. Mr. Zisseron indicated that he would be more than happy to try it. Before making this a policy, he would like to take a school like Orchard Farms that is new and set it at 68 to see what kind of a reaction they get. These schools are not homes; they are not insulated; they are brick and mortar. Cold air is coming through the brick. They can give it a shot at Orchard Farms. Western Hills gets cold even if the thermostats are set at 72 or 73. They can't maintain the heat.

Mr. Lombardi indicated to Mr. Stycos that he read his motion to suggest an inclination or an intent on the part of this School Committee to set that forth. He didn't believe that the committee was making a motion to mandate that; they want to try and do that. He heard Mr. Zisseron say that they could try it, and he heard the Superintendent say that the district has an energy czar. At the risk of sounding like a floppy bedroom slipper again, perhaps the committee should communicate its intention to the energy czar and have her report back to the committee on whether or not this is something viable and actually quantify the money that could be saved.

Mr. Stycos remarked that the committee needs to do something because otherwise Mr. Zisseron gets yelled at because the buildings

are cold. If the committee has some kind of lower standard, then Mr. Zisserson can say that it is the standard set by the School Committee. It is not him deciding to make the people cold.

Mr. Zisserson indicated that they are getting a pretty good picture now of where they stand as far as savings go in energy because it has been one year. As of November, they were somewhere around 18% over the year before. In dollars, it was

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approximately \$450,000, and this can't be pulled out of the budget because it is what the district would have spent if it didn't have this program. He asked the committee to take a look at the figures at the end of this winter. He met with one of the computer people today because he is getting comparison figures from one year ago to see what direction they are going. He would like more time before the committee makes this a policy. It is very easy to say that they will put it at 68 and have students wear sweaters, but some of the rooms can get very cold; and they will trade the sweater for a coat. He asked if they should direct the administration to give the committee some type of proposal on the possibility of lowering the set points in the schools by April. At the April Work Session, Mr. Zisserson would have his numbers for the winter done, and with the energy person he could think of a proposal knowing that the School Committee's general direction is to lower the temperature.

Mr. Scherza suggested having a building-by-building report and some of the concerns with each one at the April Work Session. The problem is that one size does not fit all. There are many unique problems in one building that they may not have in the next. Mrs. Verrengia could put together a presentation building by building with the concerns, what the cost avoidances are and where it is more doable than other places.

Mr. Lombardi added that when this budget process started one of the questions he had looking at it from a building standpoint he saw the numbers at Bain and Cranston West, and Bain was spending much more for utilities and electricity than West was where the building is twice the size of Bain. Mr. Zisseron responded that they will report back on this as well. They checked the numbers, and they are showing different. He noted that they are on a very good track, and there is a lot to it.

Mrs. Greifer asked Mr. Stycos about the suggested temperatures. She understood lowering the temperature for heating purposes and asked what his numbers were for cooling purposes. Mr. Stycos said that the policy indicates 74 to 78. Mr. Scherza commented that this is why a building-by-building report would yield a better understanding. Overall there aren't that many air conditioned areas in the schools. Mr. Zisseron noted that there is air conditioning at Edgewood Highlands, some at Orchard Farms, some at Hope Highlands, some at

Oak Lawn and Cranston East. Mrs. Greifer noted that Mr. Stycos would have to increase the cooling temperature from 78 to 82.

Mr. Stycos withdrew his motion; Ms. Iannazzi withdrew her second to the motion.

Mr. Stycos moved to request that the administration prepare a building-by-building plan to reduce heating and cooling costs and utility costs including the reduction of the heating set points and the increase of the cooling set points for the April Work Session.

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Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Archetto referred to Mr. Balducci's memo regarding closing Sanders School and moving the programs to Norwood Avenue. His memo noted that the savings for electricity would be at \$4,960; water at \$4242; custodial supplies at \$840; and gas heat at \$17,188; total savings of \$27,230. He asked Mr. Balducci if there is any support staff there, and Mr. Balducci responded that there are a few. He believed the goal is to bring that staff over to the Norwood Avenue building. They are shifting the cost from one location to another

location. The goal is to take this building off line. The only true savings are those identified in his memo. Mr. Archetto asked if this move would eliminate a custodian or a secretary. Mr. Balducci responded that the question came up regarding custodial staff, but as part of the reconfiguration of the AEP Program, there may be some savings there. A custodian from the Sanders Program will be needed for the Norwood Avenue facility for the Sanders Project. That is why he didn't identify that as a savings. It is pretty definite.

Mr. Traficante asked if the custodian at Norwood Avenue is a full-time custodian, and Mr. Balducci believed that he isn't; it is part-time. Mr. Traficante noted that if the AEP Program moves to the Charter Building, they already have a custodian and one-half. He didn't believe that they would need that part-time custodian. Mr. Balducci said that he didn't have that conversation with Mr. Zisseron to see if that position could be used elsewhere in the district, and that is why the committee can't consider it at this point.

Mr. Zisseron commented that it is a part-time custodian at Norwood Avenue. Mr. Zisseron stated that he has a plan for that part-time custodian. He has to look at Norwood Avenue to see what their needs are going to be during the day because the custodian at Sanders works 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. If the committee is going to expand the program at Norwood Avenue, he may need more coverage.

The program is growing at Special Services; the custodian at Horton

opens Special Services, stays a few hours there and goes back to Horton. He doesn't want to lose that four hours. He wants to look at some options of where he can use that four-hour person. He reminded the committee that they cut five positions from him last year and five positions five years ago. Mr. Scherza added that they are putting the addition of Cranston East on line, and that opens up approximately 40,000 square feet.

Mr. Archetto moved to reduce the budget by \$27,230.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

Mr. Lombardi asked to hear from central administration about what their opinion is about the move. Mr. Laliberte stated that the program can be moved in tact. Mr. Nero

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commented that he wanted to be sure because of some of the things that were built into that program at Sanders will be okay. Ms. Matoian-Heard, Director of the Sanders Program, said that there were modifications made to the original physical structure in terms of the safety needs for the emotionally disturbed population that they service such as a support room was built. Pegs were put on certain windows so that it wasn't a safety hazard. Plexiglas was put in so that they wouldn't have safety hazards as things occurred. They had

to provide for the students' safety, No. 1. They know that this population of students can be very risky. She understands that there have been some conversations administratively to see if they could support that kind of building in the Norwood Program. She has no issue with moving; the issue is whether or not she will have the safety level of supports that she needs.

Mr. Stycos asked if it made more sense to keep the Sanders Program where it is and close Norwood Avenue. Mr. Scherza responded that it would not make more sense because one of the things administration is proposing is to expand it. Norwood Avenue is a better facility and a bigger facility and a more complete facility. It is also in much better condition including heating and utilities. It has been spruced up quite a bit, and it would allow them to keep their Life Skills Program in tact at Norwood Avenue in addition to moving the Sanders Program in. The Sanders Program would bring anywhere from \$50,000 to \$60,000 per student in revenue if they open it up to other districts on a space available basis. If they keep it at Sanders, they would not be able to do that or at least not very much. Mr. Laliberte asked the committee to keep in mind that Norwood Avenue is handicapped accessible and has an elevator for youngsters to go from the basement floor to the first floor. Sanders does not have the handicapped accessibility.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Zisseron if he has sufficient funding to equip the Norwood Avenue School for the safety measures that will be necessary. Mr. Zisseron stated that he doesn't have funding for this

year never mind next year. There is no question that they will have to spend some money on it. They will have to build a time-out room and some of the other things mentioned by Ms. Matoian-Heard. They will do it in-house, but he doesn't know how much it will cost. He and Mrs. Matoian-Heard will walk through Norwood Avenue School to see what her needs are going to be. He couldn't give her a dollar figure, but there will be some expenditure to prepare Norwood Avenue for these students.

Mrs. Greifer suggested that it might be best at this time not to take that \$27,000 and count it as a savings. It might be better applied towards these modifications. They can always come back later, and if there is anything left over, they can play with what is left over. They will need the money to make those modifications.

Ms. Iannazzi withdrew her second.

Mrs. Archetto withdrew his motion for further study.

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Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Zisseron to come up with a figure for the March work session.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that at a recent work session the committee was discussing the idea of student parking at the high

schools. She was tasked with the job to come up with information from other high schools and parking permits for a fee plan. She did provide Mr. Nero with information from the North Alleghany High School in Pennsylvania with the permitting and accompanying policy from a high school that reflects the area and the type of schools here in Cranston. With that in mind, she drafted a brief resolution that she wished to introduce tonight in the spirit of looking at this as a possibility for the high school students who drive to school.

Mrs. Greenaway moved the following: Be it resolved that the Superintendent is directed to come up with a plan for Student Parking Permits for purchase, for Cranston High Schools East and West. The Superintendent should consult with School Committee legal counsel, and City of Cranston and State authorities where appropriate, in order to devise a policy and plan. The Superintendent will present the plan to the School Committee at the April School Committee Work Session.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

Mr. Lombardi indicated to Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway that as drafted this seemed to suggest that a parking permit fee is inevitable. It is suggesting that the committee get a report that will require the students to pay some sort of a fee. Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway responded that the way it is drafted, that is the way it reads. Mr. Lombardi stated that he is philosophically against balancing the

budget by imposing a fee on the students. Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway responded that this is not an attempt to balance the budget on a fee for the students. She has spoken to so many people over the years in so many areas, adjacent areas to our community in Rhode Island, Midwest and everywhere else, and everyone she talks with their public schools have parking fees. She doesn't think it is onerous. North Alleghany High School charges \$45.00 which compares to a couple of meals at Burger King or maybe one month of a cell phone bill. It is worth looking at. It is not meant to be a money maker. It is one of those things that seems to be something we should be doing. Part of the parking lot at West is actually owned by the state; that is why she refers to it in the amendment. She felt it was way over due. She isn't looking for it to be anything onerous. It is one of those areas where a parking permit is reasonable. The district does bussing as well. For the students who drive their cars, she thought it was a reasonable thing to do. She has a student at the high school now.

Mr. Stycos stated that he sees this as somewhat like the energy resolution that will get presented with a plan, and then it would still be up to the committee whether or not they like the plan. They would have something in place, and he felt it made sense to come

up with as many options and possibilities so they will be prepared down the road. At some point, he will offer another prepare-a-plan resolution. He stated that he would support this amendment.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway explained that it is a request to prepare a plan, and the reason she forwarded the information as requested to Mr. Nero was basically to get the administration's input on what they think of all of this. She sent them the policy, the link to North Allegheny High School so that administration could get a very good feel and do their own legwork to see what they think of all of this. She stated that she was not trying to impose her own ideas; she wanted to start the discussion. Mr. Nero commented that it is on the agenda for Tuesday morning for an Executive Session they have every Tuesday morning.

Mr. Traficante stated that he was looking at it as more of a feasibility study. Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway remarked that this is what she really intended. Mr. Lombardi suggested that it could be a feasibility study with not necessarily charging the students.

Mrs. Greifer moved to amend this Amendment. In the first line, the word "plan", insert the word "feasibility in front of it. She offered it as a friendly amendment, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway accepted it.

This Amendment now reads: : Be it resolved that the Superintendent is directed to come up with a feasibility plan for Student Parking

Permits for purchase, for Cranston High Schools East and West. The Superintendent should consult with School Committee legal counsel, and City of Cranston and State authorities where appropriate, in order to devise a policy and plan. The Superintendent will present the plan to the School Committee at the April School Committee Work Session.

This Amendment as amended was adopted with Mr. Archetto opposed.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that she also had an amendment that didn't affect the bottom line. She indicated that through this process the committee has heard from constituents who might have a level of frustration in not being able to understand the budget or the budget process. In the past, the committee had a sub-committee that studied the readability of the budget.

Ms. Iannazzi moved the following: Be it resolved that a sub-committee be formed to study the Cranston Public Schools' budget with an intention of making the budget a more readable and user-friendly document. This committee shall consist of a member of the Business Office appointed by the Superintendent, two members of the School Committee selected by the Chairman, and two members of the general public appointed by the Chairman. Every effort shall be made to have a representative of the public from the eastern side of the City and the western side of the City. The Chairman shall serve

as an ex-officio member, and this committee shall complete its recommendations by April 1, 2008 with the goal of having a more readable document for their budget presentation before the City Council.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

Mr. Lombardi asked Ms. Iannazzi if she was asking this committee to come up with a more readable document in one month, and Ms. Iannazzi responded, unfortunately, yes.

Mr. Scherza responded that they could do this and could get it done well. His big concern is that with all these special studies, the committee has been cutting staff; and they will continue doing that for next year. One of the problems they have now is dropping everything they are supposed to be doing to be responding and doing these things. His fear is that literally to do it in four weeks, his concern is that they are letting some other things slide. His fear is that they won't do justice to it in a false sense because it is not the only thing on everyone's plate.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that she would be willing to change it as long as it

is prepared for the School Committee's presentation before the City Council; she doesn't know when that particular date is. Mr. Scherza responded that they would try, and they will come through. When they do these things, it comes at great cost to the duties of running a school district.

Mrs. Greifer stated that having just chaired a committee with a deadline it is an extremely ambitious deadline, and she didn't see how they could get it done. It is a worthy goal to have a document, but she cannot see any way to get it done by them and have a good document. Having a more readable budget is a very worthy goal, but she questioned the deadline.

Mr. Stycos commented that he did think it could get done. He thinks this because one of his constituents took the budget and reconfigured it and essentially took areas and made broad categories of areas. Instead of salaries in each elementary school or itinerants in each elementary school, he put together a spread sheet of what the itinerant costs are. That was very helpful to him in looking at the budget. It is much like years ago where there use to be a summary document presented by the Superintendent. That document was so extreme in its summary that it was useless, but there is a middle ground that involves taking numbers and adding them up in different ways. He has the document . Mr. Lombardi noted that the entire committee received it. That would be helpful when going to the City Council because they don't care about the itinerants at Oak Lawn

School as an example. They care about the bigger picture. It can be done because as they have all seen it has been done. For the City Council, it will be a helpful tool.

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Mr. Archetto stated that it was a great idea. The committee needs a budget that can be read a lot easier. However, the feasibility of getting it done in five weeks is almost asking the staff the impossible.

The committee still has \$1.5 million to cut from the budget, and they need to address it. Mr. Balducci is constantly asked questions to research, and Mr. Votto is constantly asked questions. The committee has already cut central administration staff, so they are going to be short handed. The committee is asking these people to do more and more with less and less. This is a great idea, but it is better for the next budget they attempt to offer the City of Cranston. It is very premature at this time.

Steven Bloom, 54 Ingleside – He stated that he believed that this is probably doable and is a necessary tool in dealing with the budget for this year. Five weeks is not an unreasonable amount of time to probably complete the amount of work, and he has already volunteered some time. There are probably some other members of the community who are willing to volunteer some time. They could meet with administration and pull the information together for the committee. He indicated to Mr. Archetto that he understood what he

was saying, but not to try would be a mistake at this point in time. There are plenty of people in this community who want to see the School Committee and administration resolve this problem not for this year but for years into the future. This is the year to start and not put it off for another year.

Mr. Traficante commented that he could go back twenty years. That has always been a complaint of city administration and City Councils over the years that the School Committee budget is complicated and not user friendly. He has no objection to try to simplify it.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway remarked that as the other member of the budget presentation sub-committee she would like to see the committee do this because he knows first hand when they face City Council they really look at it and say they don't know how to make sense of all of it. To be able to pull together in a user friendly fashion the visual of where the money goes, how the numbers truly look at a glance, certain areas could definitely be presented in a way that the committee could get their message across better to show where their money goes, why they need the things they need as opposed to giving the City Council this large document with tons of categories; they have their own budget to worry about; they have their own priorities; and the more user friendly the budget is, the better they will be able to get their message across. She urged the committee to think strongly about supporting this. She hoped that it would be accomplished in that fashion this year. She will be supporting this.

Mr. Lombardi stated that he concurred with Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway. If Mr. Bloom and Mr. Stycos think it can be done, it is in the committee's benefit to try to do it. Anything that makes the public understand more about the budgetary process, and more importantly letting City Hall understand the budget process a little more, he is all for it.

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Mr. Archetto asked the committee not to misread him; he thought it was a wonderful idea; but he knows the hours this committee puts in on a budget; he knows the hours that Mr. Balducci and Mr. Votto put in along with Mr. Nero and Mr. Scherza. There are many difficult decisions to make in the upcoming months, but he believed they are super humans. If they can do it in five weeks, he is all for it.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Chairman Traficante appointed Mr. Stycos and Ms. Iannazzi to represent the School Committee. If they knew of people who would like to serve from the general public, one from the east side and one from the west, he asked them to notify him. Mr. Bloom and Mrs. Janice Ruggieri will serve representing the general public. Mr. Traficante stated that he would attend these meeting as an ex-officio member.

Ms. Iannazzi stated that the committee had to decrease their revenue line in the budget based on the Governor's proposed budget.

Ms. Iannazzi moved to decrease the state revenue by \$105,000.

Mrs. Greifer seconded the motion.

Mr. Balducci explained that one of the sub-categories of State Aid is referred to as Group Home Aid, and this year Cranston is receiving approximately \$120,000 in that category based on the number of licensed beds within the City of Cranston. Based on the state's calculation, per their opinion, the district has one licensed bed at a price tag of \$15,000. In next year's proposed Governor's budget, that line item has been reduced to \$15,000 from the current level of \$120,000. Even though the Governor proposed level funding State Aid, in our case and five other districts were affected by this calculation; the district's state aid is being reduced by \$105,000. Mr. Traficante asked what dictates a licensed bed. In response, Mr. Balducci said that they are trying to get their arms around that.

Mr. Traficante stated that the committee now has \$1.6 million to reduce tonight.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Stycos commented that earlier in the budget discussions, Mr.

Traficante raised the possibility of increasing the distance on the busing lines. The proposal that he made was approximately \$350,000 in savings.

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Mr. Stycos moved asking the administration to come up with a way that the district could save \$325,000 on busing that did not involve changing the lines. That would give some kind of comparison to make when considering the proposal. This feasibility plan would be presented to the School Committee at the April Work Session.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

Mr. Lombardi stated that this is not a hard-number reduction from the budget. The committee is asking for another feasibility study. Mr. Zisseron indicated to the committee that they are looking to cut \$325,000 from transportation without it affecting extending lines. Mr. Stycos said that if he were to do it he would look at the situation with the middle schools as to whether or not that will change busing in any major way, redoing routes, where they continually hear from the City Council about contracting out the busing. Those are the three things he can think of. Mr. Zisseron told the committee that this is a tough assignment because he has already looked at middle school for next year, and even though some of the numbers are down and

maybe there are a couple of runs he can consolidate, the numbers at elementary have increased. That is where he will have a problem. He wants the committee to understand that he doesn't want more buses on the road. Where some of the buses where 50 to 55 capacity at elementary, it is over 65 to 70 students. Mr. Lombardi noted that the feasibility study may come to the conclusion that he can't do without the buses, and the committee is just looking for something to compare it to.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Stycos requested that these resolutions that the committee has presented that don't have a money amount such as one on the budget, one of parking, etc. that they need to be a part of the budget document that goes to the City Council. It is important that the City Council know that the committee is looking at these things. Last year he made a resolution somewhat like this that had to do with the sewer fees. It didn't get into the budget document. He had to take another night out to go to City Hall to present it to the Council. He wanted to make sure these resolutions are in the budget document that is sent to the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Traficante stated that the budget has to be finished tonight to be presented to the Mayor by March 1st. If the committee is assuming that he is going to give the committee a 5% budget, a cap which is \$4.2 million, and the Council has to back that as well, if they do not receive that \$4.2 million, then the committee must cut further. Hopefully, some of these studies may

help them reduce that \$4.2 million if not received. It may seem trivial to the general public right now, but it will be important later on.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway added that as they present their budget it is much better use of their time if they don't have the City Council coming back indicating why they didn't look at certain things. It is so much more efficient for the committee if it goes over.

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Mr. Stycos moved to amend the budget to defund the positions of Program Supervisors.

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

Mr. Lombardi asked for a number associated with this reduction, and Mr. Balducci responded that at an earlier meeting, that was one of the budget questions. He had to refigure it to make some changes to it. Based on his revised figure, it is approximately \$1,125,333.

Mr. Stycos said the committee has to take some drastic measures to get to the number, and this is the best one he could come up with to close most of the \$1.6 million gap that is left.

Kimberly Perry, 8 Peppermill Road, Sheri Brown, Plainfield Pike, Johnston – Kimberly stated that they are both employees of Cranston

Public Schools serving as school social workers. She is a parent of two sons at Orchard Farms School. She read the following statement: We are here this evening to speak on behalf of Cranston School Social Workers and, in addition, encourage the continued security of our district social work program coordinator's position. As you know, all school social workers possess State Department of Health Licensure in addition to their certifications with the State Department of Education. As per these credential requirements, school social workers continually pursue substantial clinical training related to the delivery of mental health services to children and families. As such, we are charged with the challenge of assessing and intervening on critical issues that impact our students and families on an ongoing basis. What we wish for you to know this evening is how necessary school social work services are in maintaining and ensuring the health and safety of all Cranston Public School students while assisting them to achieve a readiness to learn and succeed.

As School Social Workers in Cranston for the last several years, we can personally attest to the dramatic changes in the profiles and needs of our students. Today, as compared to earlier in our work here, students enter our school buildings harboring greater, and more significant psychological and social difficulties than ever before. These issues significantly impede their abilities to fully, if at all, attend to their learning. In addition, school social workers are continually called upon to assess, and communicate with parents and

guardians, physicians, therapists, and other community professionals, on issues of student safety and risk, while advocating for, and establishing, appropriate behavioral and educational plans for them. We are no longer exclusive to working with those students that receive special education services, but rather, all students of all economic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Specifically at present, Ms. Brown and I service a non-capped caseload each of approximately 22 IEP students and over 100 general education students, numbers which grow almost daily.

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Within the last school year, we and our social work colleagues provided almost 100 risk assessments for students referred to us for such issues as suicidal thinking, cutting behavior, bullying, active hallucinations, domestic violence/abuse risk, and homicidal thinking. By doing so we have provided necessary, proactive services to our students and families, and prevented multiple, serious problems from occurring.

Our jobs would not be possible without the support and professional guidance of our program coordinator. Our social work supervisor ensures that we are utilizing best practices, helps to streamline services to benefit the greatest number of students and families possible, provides critical supervision and support during emergencies and beyond, and serves as a liaison between special

education evaluation teams and the district psychiatrist. While serving in this capacity, she has also maintained a caseload of her own, developed proactive, solution-focused programming saving the district considerably in outside placement tuitions, and facilitated communication between central administration and our department. The loss of our program coordinator would result in a devastating blow not only to our department but to the students and families that we serve. We urge you this evening to consider our comments so as to make the best, most informed decision possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Frank Flynn, CTA President – He asked to clarify something Mr. Zisseron had said. Those spirits that they saw moving the shades was the spirit of Catherine Ciarlo who is seeing and hearing what is happening to our beautiful district. She is rolling in her grave. He further stated that he is opposed to any plan that would eliminate the program supervisors for many reasons. Regardless of how the budget process plays out and the ultimate decisions the committee makes, next year they still have a school system to run and to run efficiently to provide the best education for the students of Cranston. They need the program supervisors in order to do that. They do many tasks. He is not a program supervisor and will not stand here and delineate all the wonderful things they do. They have varied types of responsibilities. There are some who are K to 12 who do services for pupil personnel and some who do curriculum base things aligning the curriculum so that the district is in compliance

with all the new regulations that are coming down. They need someone with expertise in those areas to serve in an oversight capacity and to assist the administrators so that they can do all of these things. Every year he goes to these budget presentations for the public and the City Council. Every year one of the key points the committee presents to the public is the fact that when the district is compared to the urban ring, and especially Warwick, the administrative costs are much less than the City of Warwick. One of the key reasons this is the case is because most of Cranston's program supervisors' and comparable jobs in Warwick are administrative jobs. The committee is getting a better value for their dollars because the teachers do the same work during the school year rather than paying an administrator a full-year's annual salary. They are saving money, and in many cases, even better results. Those are the real reasons why the committee shouldn't do this. From a contractual standpoint, he felt the committee was on very

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shaky ground for a number of reasons. First, there is collective bargaining language that says that no person will be reduced in rank or compensation without just cause. Bad economics is not just cause. These people applied for promotional positions; they were awarded those positions on the merits of their performance in the area of their expertise. Now the committee is attempting to pull that out from under them which he believed is a pure violation of the

contract. Secondly, they have an arbitrator's award which spoke to a situation some thirty years ago in which they had a similar situation where the committee was looking at department chairs and whether or not they were going to continue department chairs. In those days, they tried to appoint them annually as is done with the coaches. The alliance filed a grievance, and they lost the grievance that said that they could post them annually. At some point, that practice did stop, but the arbitrator clearly stated in his decision that the committee cannot eliminate any change in the working conditions of those people is subject to collective bargaining. He indicated he would provide the arbitrator's decision to them.

Mr. Flynn went on to say that in the teachers' contract there is language that talks about the maximum limit of staff reduction the committee can do annually. It is 1% unless there is declining enrollment. Then they can do an additional 2%. There are currently 96 layoffs, and if the committee passes this Resolution, the layoff number will approach approximately 104 or 105. Some of those people will be called back, but the district will have such a gap that is well above that. They will end up in court litigating this situation. The language is clear and unambiguous with regard to the cap the district has right now. He further commented that the program supervisors have long distinguished careers in Cranston. They are valuable to the district. A proposal like this invalidates all the wonderful things they have done, and it is disgraceful. They are creating in this district right now a climate of fear and anxiety. They had program

supervisors get up who spoke against this to defend their programs and why they thought it was a bad idea, and now there is a proposal to get rid of them. If they don't believe that people are living in fear now, he said to ask themselves this question. Monday night the committee made a proposal to raise people's health care co-share from 10% to 20%, and there wasn't a single person in this room who was impacted significantly in this increase who stood up and said a word. They have to ask themselves why. If they knew that someone was going to take money out of their pocket and discriminate against one segment of the population and not a single person said a word, one has to wonder what the thought process is and why people are doing that. He knows that the committee has a difficult job, and he has said it many times before. Please don't divide this system even more by making this foolish move that will probably be ultimately overturned in another forum.

Mr. Scherza stated that he shares Mr. Flynn's concerns about the dismantling of this system and the destruction that is taking place. This was dropped upon them, and this is not something that this group arbitrarily wants to do. In terms of the area coordinators, he would like to make a statement. These are the people they work with.

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They do a lot of wonderful things and they are wonderful people. But

despite the defunding tonight, he is hopeful that some way can be found to preserve the area coordinators. He asked the CTA to join with this administration in coming up with a workable plan that would help them to do so. He doesn't want to say die on it. He asked Mr. Flynn with all his resources to work with them to keep this from happening. How it is going to happen, he had no idea. What is possible, he had no idea right now. He wants to exhaust every avenue before they say die.

Judy Lundsten, Executive Director of Educational Programs – She stated that she knows the committee is in a very difficult position, but she and Mr. Laliberte are sitting here as curriculum directors. They work with these folks every single day. They see the body of work they do, that they present, and they work with them. The impact this decision will have on curriculum is drastic. It will affect the district's accountability standards. With the No Child Left Behind Act, they are accountable. Several of these people are directly responsible for helping them meet the performance standards. They also have a segment of these program supervisors who do specialized support service such as social workers who just spoke. In their presentation, they talked about the specific duties that the social worker coordinator does. That body of work is done by all seventeen of these individuals. They share a common body of work of supervising, assisting, helping with the best practices with the people they directly supervise. In addition, they also have individual areas of expertise. These ladies spoke to the committee about the risk

assessment that they do. When the risk assessment is finished, it goes to the supervisor and then it goes to her. They are talking about the health, welfare, and safety of the children. This decision will affect those children for academic reasons as well as for safety reasons. Mr. Laliberte told the committee that this will have a devastating effect on the educational programs offered in Cranston. Right now the State Department is breathing down their necks as far as giving the district a provisional diploma. In the year 2012, they have to have everything in place in order for them to validate the diploma so that Cranston will even be able to give out a high school diploma. The state endorsed diploma involves the students' end of course exams they have to take. The program supervisors are the very people who led the charge in developing the end of course assessments. They are the people who also have been working on developing common tasks. The portfolios that seniors have to put together have to be made up of a majority of common tasks where students at either high school, East or West, have to participate in those common tasks. Of all the decisions that have been made so far, this will have a major effect on curriculum development. The district needs to show the state that it has a plan to revise curriculum on a five-year cycle. They do not do it by assigning a curriculum to be rewritten within a year, but over a five-year period there are always so many curriculum documents that are finalized and revised over that five-year period. They are the major members of the Curriculum Advisory Board. He heads up the Curriculum Advisory Board along with Jean Campbell. He stated that they cannot do that work alone.

They need the people in the major content areas for their knowledge in order to develop good curriculum.

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Carolyn Peck, Art Program Supervisor – She read the following statement: I have been performing the duties of the Program Supervisor for the Art Department for almost ten years. We do not have department chairs. In making this proposal for the elimination of Program Supervisors, I have to ask the questions, “Do you actually know what we do?” I am sure you have a generic version of what the responsibilities are, but briefly, if I may, I would like to inform you and give you a day-to-day explanation of what goes on. I travel to support, encourage, and supervise 27 teachers who are dispersed throughout the district in early childhood, elementary, middle, high school, and Charter School; facilitate two more monthly meetings with secondary and/or elementary staff members in order to disseminate district goals, policies, and information and strengthen content teaching; oversee the bidding process for all art materials and supplies for the district; supervise the allocations and organization of supplies and materials for the elementary programs; develop curriculum and provide content related professional development; keep abreast of health, safety, and equipment issues and concerns; provide department comparability documentation for the district; assist in the development of itinerant schedules for the district and provide input to high school department scheduling;

assist administrators with classroom observations for the evaluation process; help to secure college representatives for visits to the high schools and consult with colleges in regard to student teacher placements; organize and participate in the annual Arts Fest Exhibition; collect, frame, hang, and dismantle artwork for the Briggs Exhibition; and prepare for, teach, and assess two grade level classes, with all the other responsibilities that are accompanied with that responsibility. So, I ask you, what will happen to the department and more importantly, to the students that we service if this position is eliminated? And second, who will take on these responsibilities to ensure that quality programming and education will continue? Thank you.

Jeanette Harney, Program Supervisor for Occupational Therapy, 7 Worcester Road, Norfolk, Massachusetts – She stated that she is in her ninth year of employment with Cranston Public Schools. Before she came here, Cranston Public Schools used outside private practice therapy agencies. She was hired to start an in-house therapy service. Shortly after she started here, she was told there were significant problems with parents coming to the School Committee complaining that their children weren't getting serviced, that there was inconsistency in service, and after her first year here, by the district having its own in-house therapy with five full-time therapists, they saved \$100,000. In eight years, by her efforts of supervising, planning, and organizing, there has been a savings of \$800,000. Also, by her organization and planning and the work that she does,

although there has been a great expansion of special education students and programs, they have had to add only two therapists. She thinks that through her efforts there has been a good cost savings and would urge the committee, as she looks at the quality of the services the therapists are providing, they are saving money, and if there isn't a supervisor looking at this, they won't have the cost containment that she has been able to enable within these past eight years.

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Laura Albanese, Principal of Stone Hill School an EPIC Coordinator, 4 Ruxton Street, Cranston – She echoed what Ms. Harney said and the other program supervisors. She can't imagine doing an evaluation without them. They are responsible for evaluating the social workers, the speech and language therapists, and the OT's. She can't imagine doing an evaluation without the input of these program supervisors. She can't imagine going into an IEP meeting with a brand new OT and not having the program supervisor sitting with her because they have the expertise. It is just great support for these people who are on board. She has brand new OT's and brand new speech and language people. She doesn't know enough about OT and speech and language. When she does an evaluation, she is not sure what a good OT lesson is. She isn't sure what it looks like unless she has these people with her supporting her. They know their curriculum inside and out, and they know what good teaching in that field looks like.

She asked the committee to reconsider eliminating those positions because she can't imagine doing it without them.

Mark Garceau, Principal of Gladstone Street School, 37 Tulip Drive, Cranston – He echoed Mr. Laliberte's comments when he mentioned that they feel they can't do this alone. To echo what Ms. Albanese just said, the building principals can't do it alone. He has over 500 in his building. He doesn't have the expertise that a Mary Schatz has or the expertise that the two social workers talked about. When one is talking about health and safety issues, crisis intervention, and those kinds of things, that is not his area of expertise. He can only do so much. He can work with these people and can work in the classrooms. He is all about teaching and learning; that is what he does twenty-three hours a day. They cannot do these other things alone. If they think of central administration as being in one place and the principals as being middle management in another, these people are the tissue that makes the job possible. A Jean Greco, a Mark Colozzi, a Carolyn Peck – these are the experts that they rely on because they can't do it alone. He urged the committee to please reconsider this discussion.

Jean Greco, 21 Hillcrest Drive, Program Supervisor for K-12 Guidance - She read the following statement: Once again I stand before you to advocate for our students not for a program supervisor but for our students. At first glance, eliminating program supervisors might make sense to you because there are many people who may wonder

just what we program supervisors do. However, as Mr. Traficante and Mr. Lombardi said the other night, you do not want to dismantle programs in order to balance the budget. Program supervisors are critical to the teaching and learning that takes place in this district. We are specialists in our field, highly developed, experience in knowledge in our fields is irreplaceable by current staff that exists within our school system or by replacing us with more directors as in the City of Warwick who are not certified in each of the curriculum area that the academic supervisors and the support supervisors possess. This move will have a negative impact on our entire educational system from instruction to test results to the emotional well being of our students. I would like to

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itemize for you just briefly some of the results that have been acknowledged by the program supervisor of K to 12 guidance, my predecessor, Joe Herbold, as well as myself over the past five or six years. We have developed a K to 12 school counseling curriculum framework. They have implemented the American School Counseling Association National Model, the Rhode Island Framework for School Counseling Programs. They have developed a K to 12 Scope and Sequence month by month, grade by grade chart of guidance activities to be implemented in all of our schools. We have documented K to 12 developmental guidance lessons and assessment measures. We have developed and implemented a K to 5

Bullying Prevention Program which is now evidenced based due to our collaborative research project with the University of Massachusetts. We have coordinated the 8th to 9th grade transition program at all three middle schools. We have coordinated the 5th to 6th grade transition program which will now become the 6th to 7th grade transition program. We are leading the development of the Individual Learning Plans that are mandated by the Rhode Island Department of Education, and it is one of the compliance issues that we need in order for our district to receive provisional approval for our diploma. We have collected data to demonstrate the results of counseling and secured grant money. I could go on and on, but I ask you to please reconsider this decision because it will have an extremely detrimental affect on the teaching and learning and well-being of our students.

Mark Colozzi, Program Supervisor for Music – He stated that he thought his colleagues would agree that the most important position in the job of the area coordinator is the fielding of the endless barrage of phone calls and e-mails. As the committee is painfully aware, e-mails are a great way of communicating. They get endless e-mails and phone calls from their staff members who need to ask someone who is an expert like they are in the content area. Without them, it would be impossible to do. When he approaches his excellent and incredible administration at Cranston East about school issues, their door is always open, always ready to lend a hand to give great advice. He sees the program supervisors in very much the same light. He

asked who they will they ask about content matters in particular on a daily basis. Most of their day is spent either on the road visiting their colleagues in the schools and chatting with the principals to make sure everything is running smoothly or more importantly fielding the communications that come from their staff members. If, for any reason to preserve the jobs of program supervisors, this would be the number one reason.

Deb Svitl, Program Supervisor for Nursing Services, 211 Angell Road, Lincoln – She read the following statement: I am very concerned for the health and safety of Cranston Public Schools' children, faculty, and staff as well with the elimination of the position of Program Supervisor for Nursing Services. Obviously, I am handling health issues all the time in the work place. Medical questions need to be addressed to medical personnel. The nursing department represents the place where those questions need to go to. I would like to remind you that the trend has been that we are getting more medically involved kids coming into the school department. We are getting

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them at young ages and getting them at older ages. The number of students diagnosed with Diabetes continues to rise; that is a very severe health condition that requires a lot of nursing intervention. When questions come to the nursing office, in the absence of a program supervisor, I don't know where those questions would go. A

lot of what I do as other people have mentioned is fielding phone calls. The phones are always busy in the nursing office. If there is a situation at a school, people need direction. Direction to take medical action needs to come from a medical person. One of my goals has been to standardize health offices in all the schools in Cranston Public Schools. That is another safety issue. If I go into one of my nurse's buildings to provide any type of service, I know that I can find a white binder in their office that is easily located. I can open to the first page, and I will have information that is critical to providing whatever service is necessary in that school. It may seem like a trivial matter to you, but in other systems, nurses go into school and have no idea where to find anything. They may use different forms from school to school and have different documentation procedures. With the standardization of health offices and health practices system wide, we are increasing the efficiency of the nursing services; we are providing a safer environment for our personnel and most importantly providing a safer environment for the students in the school department.

Mrs. Sviti went on to say that as program supervisor of nursing services, I would like to highlight some of the most important things. As regulations change regarding screenings or immunizations or anything to do with the health program, it is one of my major responsibilities for keeping on top of that and getting that information out to the nurses so that we can always remain in compliance with the rules and regulations. Communicable disease control and

monitoring throughout the system is another very important job. Nurses are in constant communication with me so that I can keep a pulse on what is happening system wide. If I see that there is a pocket of systems of flu or head lice or some other communicable disease, I can start to take action to prevent that spread from going elsewhere. I can also advise them on how to handle that at their school level so as not to create panic and to keep that situation under better control. Ordering of medical supplies is done through this position. That is ordering medical supplies for 10,000 plus students. Once those supplies are received, then they need to be dispersed to the different schools as necessary. It is a very huge undertaking that falls on this position. Frank Flynn mentioned that as program supervisors we are the experts in our field, and I can't emphasize that more than this particular field in the medical field of nursing in an educational environment. I really beg that you seriously consider the detrimental affects of making such a move to eliminate these positions. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Lombardi stated that he expected this issue to come before the committee, and quite frankly, prior to coming here tonight, he was disposed to voting in favor of defunding this particular aspect because he was enamored with the \$1.125 million figure. He voted for the middle school move at a time when the \$1.3 million was a

critical number toward their budget process. He did so because he saw not only was there potential savings but also he saw in his mind, notwithstanding the group that was there that night, that the alternative for those 6th graders was a viable alternative; that is, that the committee was going to place them in high performing, quality elementary schools. The administration assured the committee that it could be done and it could be done without affecting the integrity of those students. Having been here and having heard from everybody, and he wanted to qualify this by saying that he respects the opinions of all the experts that testified just now. His obligation as an elected official is for the public safety, health and welfare of the children; and he felt that notwithstanding this \$1.1 million number, he cannot support defunding this program because it goes right to the support of the children.

Mr. Stycos stated that everyone knows the committee has a very difficult job that none of them particularly like which is bringing a budget down to the level that is being imposed on them by other forces – the Legislature, City Council, and the Mayor. The committee has in general three directions that they can go to save major amounts of money. The first direction is to drastically increase class size, and thereby reduce the number of classroom teachers. That is something that he certainly doesn't want to do. He knows that from educational research that the most important thing is small class size along with a competent teacher, and the district has the competent teachers. That is one big direction the committee could go in to save

a lot of money. The second direction, which has been the direction of this committee, has been to cut administration and supervision. When administration and supervision are cut, everyone knows that these folks are not just sitting around doing nothing; they are administering and supervising. There is no question that defunding these positions would mean a reduction in supervision, a reduction in coordination, and a reduction of an overall vision. But, he finds that preferable to increasing the caseloads that were mentioned, preferable to increasing class sizes, and preferable to basically making the educational program much weaker. The third option, which this committee has also supported to the extent that it is able to do it, is to reduce the personnel costs by reducing wages or benefits. No one wants to talk about this because that is really sensitive. The committee has voted to increase the health insurance share of everyone that they can unilaterally increase the health insurance share from 10% to 20%. That is a savings for the district, but the bulk of the employees are represented by unions. They have contracts, and the contracts specify a cost share of either 3% or 5% on the health insurance. That has been a massive growth area in the budget along with retirement costs neither of which does the committee have any control over. They wouldn't want people to lose medical care, and the state sets the retirement benefits. The frustrating thing that during the entire process for him is that 90% of the comments he has received either at meetings or in e-mails has been, "please don't do this which may be move the 6th grade, cut EPIC, or whatever it is." But, what they don't hear, is instead they

should do this because they have to get to this financial number. They don't get a lot of suggestions. Any of the questions that come from the School Committee, the public

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may be under the impression that they are all geniuses; but many of these questions come from the public. They send the committee e-mails saying they should look at this. At the next meeting, Mr. Stycos or someone else has asked this insightful question that they have been fed. The committee has looked at just about everything they can think of, and this is where they are. They are \$1.6 million short in a scenario, as Mr. Traficante keeps presenting; and that is a best case scenario. The committee has \$1.6 million to get to the best case scenario, and as they all know, they won't have the best case scenario. They hope they have something close to it, but even if they defund the program supervisors, they still have a ways to go. He asked many people who have spoken tonight, and he knows many of the program supervisors; he has worked with them. He finds them to be really some of the most outstanding people the district has in its system, but the committee has to change the way things are being done somehow. He doesn't want to change it by raising class size, and he doesn't hear the unions coming forward and saying that they want to change it by increasing their share of health insurance. To him, that leaves the committee with attacking the administrative end of the system as the best option that they have. That is why he will

be supporting this motion.

Mr. Archetto stated that this is a very difficult decision. No one on this committee wants to dismantle education; that is not why they are here. No one on this committee wants to intentionally hurt the children, however, the district is in a serious, serious, serious fiscal crisis. The Mayor has level funded the school department. He has not given them any extra monetary funds. All of the expenses have gone up such as heating, utilities, etc. Last year the General Assembly put a cap on how much the city can allocate a school department. To compound the problem, the State of Rhode Island has level funded the school district. Tonight, when he attended Executive Session, the committee received a memo that the State just subtracted \$105,000 from the number that they had given the district. People don't realize the situation, and it is very difficult. He doesn't like defunding the program supervisors. It is a dangerous, dangerous thing to do; however, there is a state law that says that the committee must present a balanced budget to the city administration. It is a law; the committee must be in compliance with that law. He echoed the Superintendent's remark made earlier. It is his wish that perhaps this issue is not dead; perhaps this vote will go through, however, perhaps the Cranston Teachers' Alliance with the administration will get together to find out where they can meet a happy medium and save a partial number of some program supervisors because he thinks they are essential. In the situation they have now, the only practical way to get anywhere near the number they need is to vote

yes on this amendment.

Mr. Lombardi stated that he echoed everything that Mr. Stycos said. For the first time, he is one to say that he doesn't know where he is going to find this \$1.1 million if he votes against this. He is concerned with areas such as nursing, occupational therapy which go smack-dab against the safety, health and welfare of the children. He doesn't

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have an answer, and his frustration comes from these artificial dates. He keeps beating a dead horse with this, but here the committee is on February 27th having to present a budget on March 1st for contingencies that they don't know will exist from April, May, June or July, and that is very frustrating to him. There are things that he would like to address, but he can't address them because of law and contract. This area is not like the 6th grade move to him. This is an issue of health and welfare for the children, and he can't do it.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway echoed Mr. Stycos and to some extent what Mr. Archetto said. As far as defunding these positions, which is not the same as eliminating them, it is trying to start a constructive conversation between the administration and the CTA to work with the committee to help them get to where they need to be in the best interest of the children, and job No. 1 is to balance the budget. She,

for one, does not want to start raising the amount of children in the classrooms to exorbitant high levels which is the most direct way to harm the children. As to the other areas, of course, she is concerned about their health, safety, and welfare. The committee is looking to be creatively solving that issue with a very talented pool of individuals, some of whom got up and spoke as program supervisors; but, of course, they are asking the CTA to step up and help solve this problem. She urged that, and she will be supporting this amendment for those reasons and under those facts.

Mr. Traficante stated that the committee had to clarify something immediately. Mr. Flynn made a comment that some of the committee's cuts were earmarked as a vendetta. That bothered him a great deal. He stated to Mr. Flynn that he could assure him of one thing. In all of the committee's discussions, whether in Executive Session or in public session, not once did he hear a School Committee member indicate that the budget will be cut to eliminate a particular person because that person spoke out against whether it was the 6th grade reconfiguration or any other topic. In fact, if Mr. Flynn recalled, at that particular session when the committee made that decision, he complemented Mr. Flynn and the CTA for doing their job; and their job was to try to save jobs. He complemented him on the program that he ran to try to save those jobs. He wasn't angry about that. In fact, he sat on that 6th grade reconfiguration committee, and they butted heads many times with members of the committee. They knew where they stood, but not once did any

committee member say that because of what had occurred regarding the CTA's particular lobbying effort that the committee would get some particular people for speaking out against them or performing such particular activity against them. That was not the case he assured Mr. Flynn. He was sitting here tonight with very mixed emotions about this resolution, and he was sitting here with mixed emotions because he knows for a fact that he is not optimistic in the least that they are going to get \$4.2 million from the City of Cranston. He would bet his house on it tonight. He doesn't see it happening at all which means that the committee will come back to the drawing board very shortly after the City Council and the Mayor deliberate on the budget. They will be back here again to not only talk about eliminating area

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coordinators but also they will be talking about eliminating a variety of programs which will devastate this school department. They have no choice; they are getting desperate. They are talking about lowering the thermostat to save money. That is where they are coming from. They are trying to think of every possible way to save a nickel or a dime to get to this figure of \$8 million, and there is no doubt in his mind that the committee will have to look for several more million after the budget is presented to the City Council, and they approve it. The committee will be back here again scratching their heads as to where they will find the money. He told Mr. Flynn

that he is counting on him. He has that kind of faith in Mr. Flynn that he will sit down with this administration immediately to talk about this issue to try to resolve this issue so that they can salvage what so many people spoke about tonight. He realizes the job they do. He knows how important it is. He served in the school department for twenty years; he realizes what a critical blow it will be for this system; but he is counting on Mr. Flynn and the CTA. He is also counting on the Superintendent to get this issue resolved and get it resolved immediately because he doesn't want to cut \$1.1 million and lose a group of people that basically is critical to this educational system. He couldn't tell the public right now which way he is going to vote; he really didn't know. It bothers him. He is asking himself where he is going to find another \$1.6 million. The committee can very easily cut it from health care as they did last year, and it came back to bite them. They had to make up that \$1 million. They could very easily do that tonight, but that is not the resolution, and it won't solve anything because it will come right back to find the \$1.6 million that they cut out of health care.

Mr. Traficante called for a five-minute recess at 9:30 p.m.

Mr. Traficante reconvened public session at 9:40 p.m.

Mr. Traficante asked to clarify one particular point that he made earlier. When he said that the district won't receive \$4.2 million from the City administration or the City Council, he said that because it is

not there. With state government basically taking away municipal aid, and the economy is very poor, the growth won't be there. Everyone knows that during a political year, the Mayor won't raise taxes so he didn't see them generating that kind of money to give the school district the 5% cap. That is why he made that particular comment.

Ms. Iannazzi remarked that looking back on her three years on the School Committee, this is the worst vote she has ever had to take. This is not a vote she wants to take, but, unfortunately, she feels this is a vote she had to support. It is because of the reasons Mr. Stycos so eloquently stated and it is the dire situation this city is facing. If the Cranston Teachers' Alliance comes to them tomorrow morning and says put them back; they will switch to United and save \$2 million, the committee is there. They are there

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with the teachers' union in any spirit of negotiation that they come to them with. Unfortunately, this is the committee's only option right now, and for that reason, she will support this.

Mrs. Greifer stated that she feels the way that Ms. Iannazzi does. She told some people in the audience that she was feeling a little sick to her stomach right now. She doesn't see any way out of this. She values these people. She knows a number of them fairly well, and

she has seen the work that they do. She feels that they are blessed to have people of such high caliber in this district, but the committee is just getting started here. She has to vote for this, but as Ms. Iannazzi said, this is the worst decision she has had to make in her tenure on the School Committee.

Mr. Lombardi stated that strangely enough he would be voting against this, but he could say wholeheartedly that he hasn't been here for three years; but it is the most difficult decision he has had to make since his tenure here. Voting against what he sees as the majority, he doesn't disagree with the majority; but there are other issues involved for him.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Lombardi opposed.

Mr. Balducci stated that the committee still had \$490,686 to go.

Mr. Stycos moved to eliminate the extra library book allocation on page 154 of the budget in the amount of \$36,000. He clarified that there is a regular budget for library books, and then two years ago the Superintendent decided that they needed to renovate or spruce up the collections in the elementary schools. A dollar figure was selected to do that, and then that was divided by three and that number was \$36,000. It is his understanding that if they cut \$36,000, what they are cutting is the third year of a library book improvement program. They have two years at \$76,000 which has already been

spent and still have the regular routine library budget.

Mr. Scherza stated that Mr. Stycos was correct. This was a supplementary program to bring the libraries and library holdings up to snuff after many years of neglect. It is over and above the normal library budget. He believed that it was a three-year program, and Mr. Balducci responded that it is a three-year program.

Susan Bryan, Principal of Stadium School and Director of Library Services – She stated that she believed former Superintendent Catherine Ciarlo intended this to be a five-year program, and it is supplemental for the replacement of books that they lost over the years or new curricula has necessitated a replacement. Typically, a book costs \$20.00, and when a child loses a book, they don't necessarily charge that \$20.00; it is a \$10.00 fee. They were hoping to use that separate allocation as they move the 6th

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grade down to the elementary to support the curricula holdings and the holes in the collection they will have to build in both literature and the non-fiction area. She would like to hold on to that, but she understood their position.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Archetto opposed.

Mr. Stycos stated that there is \$100,000 in the budget for new buses on page 138 of the budget, and there is \$75,000 in the budget for new plant equipment on page 144. He believed that in both of those line items the amount in the current year is zero and maybe the previous year as well. He asked Mr. Zisseron to explain to the committee what those amounts represent and if they see a way to reduce them at all. Mr. Zisseron explained that they have three plows and trucks that are fourteen years old. The other night when they went out to plow one of them dropped a transmission so then they were down to two for the night. Now they are going to spend money to fix the transmission on a fourteen year old truck. They do an awful lot of work without contracting. They have one contract for snow removal which is some of the bigger units, and the City takes care of three. They do an awful lot of work, and the trucks get punished. They have to have some kind of replacement program sooner or later. As they can see, over the years he tries to buy used trucks so that he is not paying \$25,000 or \$30,000 for a truck. They have an electrician's truck that has a cherry picker on it so that they can do outside work. They normally don't use it for outside lighting, but they can use it for cutting down tree branches around schools and getting up on roofs. That vehicle was purchased in 1989 or 1990 and he bought it used. That truck has to be replaced. The equipment has to be replaced every so often. With regard to school buses, there is a new regulation that they cannot have as of September 1st of this year any buses that are 1992 cannot be on the road any longer. They have a

number of those buses. He also buys used school buses, and he gets a good five or six years out of them. The district can't afford new buses because a new bus costs approximately \$55,000. That is where the money would be spent.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 144 of the budget, \$75,000 for plant equipment. The current year for the budget is zero, last year the actual expenditure was zero, and the year before that it was \$25,000. Mr. Zisseron explained that this has been cut only because of the budget problems they have had to balance the budget. It was a nice large figure to take out. They did buy some equipment two years ago through asset protection, but that hasn't been funded. It wasn't funded last year and this year, and he doubted it would be funded next year.

Mr. Stycos asked that if they cut the \$75,000 to \$25,000 would it give him some money. Mr. Zisseron responded that they will make do. Mr. Balducci added that the last couple of years have been zero because that has been an area where the city has funded those expenditures. They have bought buses the last couple of years, and every year they try to upgrade Mr. Zisseron's maintenance fleet. That has been an

area where they have been gracious enough to fund the expenditures.

In this year's budget, the reason why it is zero is because as a part of the police station sale approximately \$175,000 has been earmarked as part of that sale. They don't know what will happen in next year's budget, but they would like to start the conversation that it is important to replace buses and also to upgrade the fleet as he has indicated how much some of them are. Administration feels it is their obligation to identify them and then have the conversation with the City to see if they are gracious enough to fund those expenditures again.

Mr. Zisseron commented that he has had some very big expenditures this year on emergencies that they would normally charge to asset protection. He would like to pursue, but the committee would have to be supportive of it at some point in time, a lease/purchase on trucks where the district wouldn't be putting out that capital money in one chunk in one year. Normally, they would be paying over three to five years with interest.

Mr. Traficante stated that over the years the City has purchased six wheel light vehicles and ten wheelers through bond money. He asked why this can't be done on the school side. In response, Mr. Zisseron indicated that none of the school bonds include equipment because they have enough problems once they are passed to get the money to use for the buildings. Mr. Traficante asked why they couldn't float a bond in the forthcoming election that has a mix of renovations and equipment. In that way they wouldn't have to continue dipping into

the operating budget. The duration of the vehicles is anywhere from five to ten years which qualified for capital budget. Mr. Zisseron responded that the problem is that the School Committee may support it, and the Board of Regents may support it; but the Mayor has to support it to the City Council. Last election the school district went to the Mayor to run a \$4.5 million fire code bond to pay for the sprinkler systems at Gladstone, West, Western Hills, and Bain. Those are million dollar jobs, and at the time, they were told that the City would not support putting it on a ballot. This year there is an election, and he didn't know if Mr. Balducci had heard from the RI Department of Education with regard to application. The projects he has been doing have been taken out of repair and renovation which leaves him with less money to do projects in the schools. Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Balducci if it was too late to ask the administration to float a bond regarding renovation, repair and equipment. Mr. Balducci responded that they start the process going before the School Committee for approval and then the recommendations go to the Board of Regents for their approval; and then the Council is next. Mr. Traficante suggested that they should start that process rather quickly. Mr. Zisseron explained that there are three bonds he would like to get on the ballot, a repair and renovation bond, a fire code bond, and an equipment bond; or they can put it all into one mix. Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Zisseron to think about the public being faced with three bonds, and there is a reluctance on the part of the general public to support that many bonds at one time. He would rather like to see it combined into one

bond.

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Mr. Stycos stated that Mr. Balducci made a good point about having those numbers in the plant and bus line items. When they cut the asset protection account, they did leave \$50,000 in the asset protection account, and now after this discussion, he is wondering if they cut \$50,000 does it make sense to cut it out of the asset protection budget. They left \$50,000 in that line item. Mr. Zisseron responded that he needs equipment. Mr. Stycos stated that in the past they have used the asset protection for equipment, but it makes more sense to go to the City Council saying that the district has a \$75,000 need for plant equipment and a \$100,000 need for bus equipment. He suggested putting the zero in the asset protection because it is too nebulous. He would leave plant equipment alone, leave buses alone, and zero out the additional \$50,000 out of the asset protection.

Mr. Nero stated that the committee received an e-mail from him. His concern is that when they go to move the 6th grade from middle school he will need some things for asset protection, and he will need money for cafeteria tables and things of that nature. His concern is that if the committee does that will he be able to get some of the things he needs through other budget accounts. He commented that he is trying to keep a real tight budget. They cut asset protection last

year, and he didn't think they would be in this position when they began looking at things in September to do this year. Mr. Zisseron asked if he heard correctly that Mr. Stycos would zero out asset protection, keep \$50,000 in plant, and \$100,000 in buses. He further commented that if he has to live with it, he will. He wants to pursue that lease purchase. If it works out well, he would look to the committee to support it. He knows it is a five-year obligation, but financially it is easier on everyone.

Mr. Stycos moved to reduce plant equipment from \$75,000 to \$50,000 and reduce asset protection from \$50,000 to \$25,000 for a net savings of \$50,000.

Paul DePalma, 16 Lawnacre Drive, North Providence – He asked to present a document to the committee. When he reads this document this situation the district is in is bigger than anyone in this room. The situation the district is in with all the budget cuts the committee is faced with this because of the federal government tax policy that has taken \$185 billion from states just from the years 2001 to 2005, and the situation is not going to get better. He wanted to speak just so that he could present this document for the School Committee to read. With the way the state budget is going, next year it is going to be even worse. There are solutions in this document. (A copy of this report is attached for the record.) Mr. Traficante indicated that the clerk would make copies for the School Committee. Mr. DePalma suggested having the state senators apply pressure so that this can

change and the school districts won't be in this situation again.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

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Mr. Stycos referred to the music texts that the committee had discussed at an earlier meeting. The budget item is \$156,410, and Mr. Colozzi had made a statement about the 6th grade being important. Mr. Stycos indicated that he would cut this amount by \$100,000. Mr. Colozzi responded that he needs updated pricing since the last pricing was October 2006. He had contacted McMillan McGraw Hill. \$50,000 would buy a grade level. Mr. Stycos asked how \$156,000 buys six grade levels, but \$50,000 buys one grade level. In response, Mr. Colozzi said that he didn't know where the figure of \$156,000 came from. He will have to get updated pricing.

Mr. Stycos moved to reduce the elementary music texts from \$156,410 to \$56,410 for a savings of \$100,000.

Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Lombardi referred to page 138 of the budget and asked about the fuel account. In response, Mr. Balducci said that this is gasoline for the diesel buses. Mr. Lombardi indicated that the actual numbers for the prior two years were \$238,000 and \$271,000. He understands that gasoline has gone up, but this seems to be suggesting about a 50% increase over the last two years. It seemed a little steep to him particularly since they are considering 06-07 when the gas crunch began. He felt that the figure was a little high.

Mrs. Greifer indicated that she was also looking at that line and was also comparing that which is a 46% increase over 06-07 actual and then down at the bottom of page 139, the last item, is transportation special ed gasoline diesel, and that figure is an increase of 21% over the 06-07 actual. She asked why 46% for one kind and 21% on the other. Mr. Zisseron responded that the special needs buses go more miles burning more gas because they have AMPMK which is a lot of stop and go throughout the city. They are picking up anywhere from fifteen to twenty-eight youngsters plus seven or eight are going out of the city. With regard to gasoline, he mentioned this to Mr. Balducci about one week ago. Right now the district is paying \$1.00 more a gallon than they did last year. They are paying approximately \$3.22 for diesel and for premium they are paying approximately \$3.35.

The cost of gasoline is unbelievable. They burn a total of approximately 350,000 to 400,000 gallons per year. If they are looking from a budget-to-budget standpoint, this year's budget, 07-08, that \$223,000 is grossly under funded. That is an account that

administration brought to the consultant's attention as part of the Caruolo process. They are spending at a level much greater than the \$223,000. If they look at it from an actual spending point to a projected spending point, it does make more sense. Mr. Lombardi asked Mr. Balducci if he could extrapolate for the committee approximately what he envisions the current year's actual will be. In response, Mr.

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Balducci said that he could not give them the information this evening, but he would get back to them with the information.

Mrs. Greifer commented that on one line item diesel is going up by 46% and another line for diesel it is going up 21%. That part doesn't make sense to her. If the cost needs to go up 46% and that is realistic, she asked why the other line isn't going up 46%. Mr. Zisseron responded that Mr. Balducci had answered the question by stating that it wasn't funded properly last year. It is one of those areas where the budget is balanced, and they take the figure out and hope that they generate during the year to put back more. It wasn't funded properly the year before either so it is catching up. The increase is humungous when one looks at last year, but when it is not funded, the committee is being mislead by some figures. Mrs. Grier stated that she is comparing diesel and diesel. The 21% is for the

special ed buses. Mr. Zisseron indicated that the large diesel buses get only four or five miles to the gallon.

Mr. Lombardi asked Mr. Balducci if he had a comfort level with that budgeted number being \$300,000 rather than \$347,500. That would show a dramatic increase of approximately \$70,000 from last year's budget and approximately \$35,000 more than the actuals for the two years prior. Mr. Zisseron added that when he and Mr. Balducci worked on the budget he took the number of gallons and multiplied it by what they are paying today. Mr. Lombardi stated that he is looking to increase that number from last year's grossly under funded budget. He asked if they needed to increase it as far as they are increasing it. He is suggesting that there is a \$47,000 or \$48,000 cushion in that number based on the two actuals from 05-06, 06-07, and the grossly under funded number from last year. He is suggesting that they go from \$223,000 budgeted last year to \$300,000 this year which would represent an increase from last year's budgeted item of approximately \$70,000 and actually increase the last two years prior by approximately \$30,000.

Mr. Scherza asked if last year or the year before did the district purchase any additional buses that run on diesel which would have increased the number of diesel vehicles in the fleet over prior years. If that happened, that may account for some of the discrepancy. Mr. Zisseron responded that they did purchase some diesel vehicles. The entire bus fleet is diesel. The small bus fleet is 50/50.

Mr. Lombardi moved to reduce the line item on page 138 from a requested amount of \$347,400 to an even \$300,000 for a savings of \$47,400. It represents a dramatic increase from last year's budget of approximately \$80,000. It represents an increase in the actuals of approximately \$30,000 from 06-07. That would reflect an approximate 28% increase which is in line with Mrs. Greifer's point on the special ed gas diesel which is a 21% increase.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway seconded the motion.

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Mrs. Janice Ruggieri – She referred to page 139 of the budget and noted that it is Trans Spec Ed Outside Main. It is a \$55,000 increase, and she didn't know if this had something to do with it. Mr. Zisserson explained that this line item is maintenance on the buses.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Stycos opposed.

Ms. Iannazzi moved to reduce the budget by \$80,000 from the savings of one itinerant position based on the 6th grade move.

Mr. Stycos seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Mr. Balducci stated that the amount now is \$177,286.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 146 of the budget. It is the second from the bottom item, the return from leave salary account. This account is projecting that everyone who is out on leave is going to come back from leave, and then they will have to pay them a higher salary because they are more senior. It also doesn't project that anyone new goes out on leave or that people decide not to come back from leave. It is his impression over the years that this usually just about levels itself out from people who don't come back who they budget to come back plus new people going out. He asked if this information was accurate.

Mr. Scherza responded that he believed those items he mentioned about people not coming back and people going out are calculated as part of the turnover allowance. Mr. Stycos responded that they don't have a turnover allowance in this budget. Mr. Balducci responded that in looking at the work sheet that was prepared to identify \$184,000, it appears that they can reduce it by \$86,350 at this point. Mr. Stycos asked if this counts new people going out on leave, and Mr. Balducci responded that it does not. Mr. Votto noted that this year is a little extraordinary because there are two people who are actually on leave who are being laid off. Normally, he would figure those people to come back. What they were able to know is who is committed to coming back and still have until April 15th for some of

the others. Two people requested a leave and went on leave, and they are not due back until next year. It is safe to say \$100,000 at this point.

Mr. Stycos moved to remove from the teachers returning from leave account by \$177,286.

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Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted unanimously.

Moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried to accept the budget as amended.

NO. 08-1-16 – RESOLVED, that the 2008-2009 Capital Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent, be approved.

CAPITAL BUDGET 2008-2009

BOND 04 – 25

Cranston High School West – Sprinklers \$2,400,000

Western Hills Middle School – Sprinklers

BOND 04 – 25

Cranston High School West – Bleachers \$ 150,000

BOND 427/529

Park View – Renovate Library \$ 100,000

Renovate Science Rooms \$1,700,000

Bain / Park View / Western Hills

BOND 04 – 25

**Relocate and renovate four (4) portable \$ 400,000
classrooms; 2 at Woodridge School and 2
at Arlington School**

\$4,750,000

**Moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Lombardi to remove this
Resolution from the table.**

**Moved by Ms. Iannazzi and seconded by Mr. Lombardi to adopt this
Resolution.**

**Mr. Stycos moved to change the Park View renovate library and the
renovate science rooms at Bain, Park View, and Western Hills which
is \$1.8 million to energy conservation measures.**

Ms. Iannazzi seconded the motion.

Mr. Traficante explained that Mr. Stycos wants to replace the \$1.7 million and the \$100,000 with window replacements. The three middle schools add up to \$1.625 million. Mr. Zisseron said that his first thought would be windows which he was going to come back in another year for. He wanted to get into the buildings themselves to do some renovations. The science rooms are deplorable. Mr. Nero stated that he agreed with Mr. Zisseron. As an educator, they are deplorable. The windows are hugely important, but they have made a major decision in terms of moving the 6th graders so that they can get at some of these projects including the science classrooms. He said it during the middle school move discussions that the heart of the schools is the libraries and the science laboratories. Math is also very important, but it can be taught anywhere. He asked them to make the science classrooms a priority. When talking about competing against the world market, they have to start thinking about science as being a priority. They have been teaching science in some of the schools in portables on \$29.00 fold-out tables. The fact of the matter is that the sinks in Western Hills in the science classrooms just don't work. He walked into Park View a couple of weeks ago, and there have been no renovations there as well. With Bain it is the same situation with no renovations since the mid 1960's. This has to

be a priority with the School Committee. He understands energy conservation.

Mrs. Lundsten stated that the committee needs to be aware that for the first time this spring the students in the 8th grade level will be tested in science. It is not book science; it is inquiry based science, hands-on science. In order for them to compete with the rest of the students across the state, they need to assure that they have access to the environment that is going to support that. Like Mr. Nero, she has walked through the science labs; and they are deplorable. There is no way they can help and support the students' education if they leave these science labs the way they presently are. She has sat next to the windows with the wind blowing in. However, she also knows what they need for the science labs. She can't stress how highly they need that if they are going to have these kids compete and do what they need to do.

Ms. Iannazzi commented that windows and energy conservation are important, but looking a couple of weeks ago at the science rooms in Western Hills and also voting for the middle school move, part of the reason for both was to really enhance the science curriculum, and they can't do that with the current state of affairs in the science building here. She will not support it. She seconded it for discussion only.

Ms. Norma Cole, Principal of Western Hills Middle School – She

echoed what everyone said. She appreciated those positive comments from Ms. Iannazzi. She invited the School Committee to see what those kids do in inquiry based science and the fact that they are dissecting eye balls and frogs and all kinds of wonderful things, and they are doing those things on tables that Mr. Nero purchased for \$29.00. The teachers are making an unbelievable effort, but the sinks don't work; it is not sanitary.

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The plugs are not right. It is just a mess. She asked the committee to take a look at that. If it means lowering the heat or whatever they need to do, she asked them to please reconsider that.

Mr. Stycos asked if they are renovating all the science rooms or 2/3 of the science rooms. Mr. Traficante believed it was twenty-one science rooms. Mr. Stycos asked if they could renovate 2/3 of them because there are only two grades and not three grades. Mr. Nero responded that they need to do all of them at once because of the plumbing involved. The district needs to provide a science environment appropriate for this day and age.

Mr. Stycos withdrew his motion.

Ms. Iannazzi withdrew her second.

Mr. Stycos moved to withdraw \$100,000 for the Park View Library for energy conservation.

He explained that if they save energy costs, they are driving down their operating costs. It makes more sense to do that earlier than later.

Mr. Lombardi seconded the motion.

This Amendment was adopted with Mr. Archetto, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Stycos, and Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway in favor; Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, and Mr. Traficante were opposed.

This Resolution as amended was adopted unanimously.

IX. New Business

There was no new business.

X. Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items

No members of the public spoke on non-agenda items.

XI. Announcement of Future Meetings

Mr. Traficante stated that the next meeting will be a work session on March 12, 2008 in the Briggs Building at 6:00 p.m.

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XII. Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at

10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea M. Iannazzi

Clerk